

The Life of Barbara Joe Hoshizaki (1928–2012)

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Barbara Joe Hoshizaki (Fig. 1), past president and life member of the American Fern Society, died on 30 May 2012. She was one of the country's leading fern horticulturists. Besides the American Fern Society, Barbara served as president of the Southern California Horticultural Institute and the Los Angeles International Fern Society. She had also served as vice-president of the Pacific Horticultural Foundation. Furthermore, she was an honorary member of the Los Angeles International Fern Society and the Tropical Fern and Exotic Plant Society, Inc. Throughout her career she collaborated with researchers in academia and with commercial and amateur horticulturalists. Traveling widely, she studied ferns in their native habitats in North and South America, the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa. She introduced many fern species into cultivation and wrote scientific and popular papers on ferns. An avid taxonomist, she corrected the scientific names of many ferns that had been misidentified in the horticultural trade.

Born June 14, 1928, Barbara attended public schools in Los Angeles. In 1951 she received a BS from the University of California, Los Angeles. There she met Mildred Mathias, a professor of botany, who became Barbara's mentor and encouraged her to study ferns. In 1954 Barbara received an MS from UCLA and soon afterwards became a professor of biology at Los Angeles City College where she taught for 28 years. She was also Curator of Ferns at the UCLA Herbarium.

In 1967 Barbara spent eight weeks in Costa Rica on a fern course sponsored by the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS). The course, taught by Warren H. Wagner, Jr., and John T. Mickel, introduced her to the diversity of tropical ferns and lycophytes, an experience she never forgot. She requested that, after her death, donations in her name be sent to OTS.

Barbara was best known for her book *Fern Growers Manual* (Knopf, 1975). This work, which treated about 390 species, served as a standard reference for ferns cultivated in the United States and Canada. A revised edition, which included about 700 species, was later published with Robbin C. Moran as co-author (Timber Press, 2001). It described and illustrated nearly all of the ferns and lycophytes commonly found in the horticultural trade in North America.

A personal reminiscence: While revising the *Fern Grower's Manual*, I spent three days with Barbara and her husband, Takashi, a plant physiologist, at their home in Los Angeles. Their greenhouse and yard encompassed a superb collection of living ferns, which at its peak harbored about 1000 species. The purpose of my visit was to compare our descriptions of fern species in the revised manuscript with the living ferns in her garden. At the end of the three days, we had not completed the task. The collection was so extensive that we



FIG. 1. Barbara Joe Hoshizaki at her home in Los Angeles, California (1999). (Photo by Robbin C. Moran.)

were able to examine only about four-fifths of the outdoor ferns—and we never made it to the greenhouse! During the visit, it was apparent that Barbara’s first-hand knowledge of ferns in her garden was remarkable. She often pointed out subtle distinctions between related species such as differences in shades of green of the leaves, how the leaves oriented themselves above ground, and seasonal timing in the production of leaves. I remember her telling me—much to my amazement as a “northerner”—that her biggest problem growing ferns was not cold weather but the fiercely hot and dry Santa Ana winds that barreled down from the San Bernardino mountains in the fall, sucking the moisture out of the soil and plants. Besides serving for research, Barbara’s garden was the source of plants that she generously sent to whoever requested a particular species.

Barbara will be greatly missed. A warm, gentle, easy-going person, she readily helped others with all aspects of fern horticulture. She did much to popularize ferns, especially as a sought-after public speaker for horticultural societies and garden clubs. The fern world has lost a dear friend.

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